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APPROVED FOR RELEASE
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24 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Historical Analysis of U-2 Overflights of Cuba

1. This memorandum is responsive to your request for an historical analysis of the relevant actions bearing upon U-2 coverage of Cuba.

2. In the case of the Cuban operations, as in the case of all other covert overflight activities, the COMOR has endeavored to establish the urgency and the frequency of flights required to satisfy the objectives of the Intelligence Community with a minimum of risk to the capability and assets employed.

3. Mindful of the political repercussions which inevitably result from a mishap during the conduct of these operations, the COMOR has tried at all times to document its requirements with sufficient thoroughness to insure that subsequent close examination would lead to a reasonable conclusion that the anticipated results were at least commensurate with the risks involved.

4. Under this philosophy, of course, the concept of "over kill" cannot be justified, nor has any development in the Cuban situation indicated that any other approach would have served us better in the past.

5. Procedurally, the following elements are all relevant to the accomplishment of overflights:

a. The recommendations of the USIB Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance and its definition of requirements on behalf of the Intelligence Community;

b. The United States Intelligence Board;

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c. The Special Group;

d. Operations.

6. It should be understood that procedure has varied in regard to the submission of COMOR recommendations for overflight reconnaissance. Generally COMOR recommendations have been forwarded directly to the Special Group, it being understood that the COMOR representatives' views had been expressed with the approval of their principals on the Board. On some occasions, as in "Intelligence Justification and Requirements for Overflight of Cuba" (USIB-D-41.5/28; COMOR-D-24/22; 10 October 1962), the Board, after reviewing the COMOR recommendation, took additional action. In the very important instance cited, the Board:

a. Agreed that the Chairman should express to the Special Group the Board's view that the targets in Groups II and III (Tabs B and C of Attachment 1 of reference) should be surveyed as promptly as possible, and that the results of such initial surveillance should determine the subsequent frequency of coverage to be recommended.

b. Requested COMOR to submit for consideration at the USIB meeting on 17 October a specific list of those priority targets in Group IV (Tab D of Attachment 1 to the reference) which should be covered, taking into account technical factors, intelligence justification, what type of intelligence could reasonably be expected to be obtained, and accessibility of the target.

7. The Special Group not only acted on COMOR, or in certain cases USIB, recommendations which are briefly summarized in the minutes of the Special Group but also noted the monthly forecast for CIA air activities. This document was used as a means of keeping the Special Group currently apprised of what missions were soon to take place in pursuance of Special Group approval. It provided an opportunity for the Special Group to bring to bear any

special factors which may have developed since a program had been approved. A summary of the monthly forecast as applicable to Cuba from June 1961 to October 1962 is set forth in Tab B. The preparation of the forecast was the responsibility of the Assistant Director Office of Special Activities/DDR/CIA (previously Development Projects Division/DDP/CIA).

8. The Office of Special Activities/DDR/CIA had the responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the Special Group. A record of the flights by mission number and date is set forth at Tab C. The record also shows SAC flights.

9. In order to focus directly on the period of greatest historical interest, namely, from 1 June 1962 to the present, a running account showing the relationship as applicable between the various elements described above is set forth as Tab A. A careful study of this paper suggests the following conclusions:

a. That operations from June 1962 until October 12 (when SAC took over) was active every day feasible. This means that there were sufficient missions approved to keep it busy, taking account of weather, malfunctions, aircraft maintenance, or fuel contamination.

b. That on days when the weather was good, operations could have flown more missions if

(1) More aircraft had been available or,

(2) A number of missions had been authorized to go simultaneously when good weather existed.

10. Included for reference there is attached at Tab D a memorandum prepared by Mr. Tom Parrott giving a resume of the relevant actions by the Special Group. Also of interest and for ready reference is a copy of a letter sent by the Acting Director of Central Intelligence to the Secretary of Defense on September 10 regarding the institution of low-level reconnaissance over Cuba.

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11. Finally, there is included at Tab F a brief memorandum prepared by the DD/I area recounting the chronology in the suspicions, acquisition of evidence, and confirmation of SAMs, MREMs, and IL-28s.

[redacted]

James Q. Reber
Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

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TAB A

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME OF ACTIONS OF COMOR AND OSA/DD-R/CIA (OPERATIONS) ON OVERFLIGHT OF CUBA

13 June — COMOR D-24/13 "Request for Special Cuban Missions" dated 13 June 1962 para 3. . . . "It (COMOR) also concludes that the missions now approved for July be conducted at weekly intervals in early July (2 missions)." This document and recommendation were approved by the Special Group on 14 June 1962.

27 June — [redacted]

29 June — Mission 3051 successful.

6-8 July — Weather o. k. for mission on 8th. but A/C aborted and returned to Edwards Air Force Base -- camera malfunction.

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9-10 July	Mission 3085 given Go for the 10th. Abort mechanical.
11 July	Another 24-hour delay -- mechanical.
12 July	3085 flew successful mission.
5 August	3086 flew successful mission on schedule.
6 August	3087 scheduled for 8th. Weather bad and op reasons caused cancellation on 8th.
10 August	Looked at weather for possible mission on 12th. Weather forecast resulted in cancellation at Alert briefing.
13 August	The next COMOR document concerning requirements for Cuba was 13 August 1962: "Requirements for U-2 coverage of Cuba", COMOR D-26/14, [redacted] para 4b. "That the COMOR priority requirements in Cuba should be covered by U-2 sorce during August. (This would probably take two missions.) It is proposed that these be planned so as to meet those requirements and in addition the operational requirements for CIA/DDP."
19-24 August	Looked at weather daily for poss. 3087. Went to Go-No-Go on 24th. Weather was bad and 3087 was canceled.
24-29 August	Continued looking daily and 3088 was flown on the 29th. This completed authorized number of missions for August. First SAM sites (eight in number) and the coastal defense cruise-missile site at Banes were found for the first time.

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TAB A

5 September	3089 flew on schedule 5 September. — found five SAM sites in eastern Cuba and another coastal defense cruise-missile site.
~~6-16 September~~ ~~(8 September was in effect because of loss of shoot-down of~~ [redacted]	~~Looked at weather daily but a stand-down was~~ only standdown [redacted] was on ~~in effect because of loss of~~ by intuit doctrine.
16 September	Went to Go-No-Go for 3090 on 16th. Weather went bad and mission was canceled.
17 September	3091 flew ~~successful~~ unsuccessful mission. Weather fell apart after take off. No exploitable photography. — where
18-21 September	Looked daily at weather until 3092 was alerted for 22 September and went to Go-No-Go before canceling because of weather.
22-26 September	Looked at weather daily except Saturday 22nd and 3093 was flown on 26 September. — (?)
27 September	No alert -- weather bad.
28 September	3094 alerted -- canceled at Go-No-Go because of weather.
29 September	3095 flew on 29 September. (Isle of Pines etc)
29 September-2 October	Looked at weather daily 3096 and 3097. Alerted for 2 October but canceled at mission plan time.
3 October	No alert -- weather bad.
4 October	Mission 3098 alerted.
5 October	3098 flew successful mission. — overfly - shallow (Peripheral route and SF coast)

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TAB A

5 October	The COMOR D-24/20 was the next request for U-2 coverage. Essentially, this paper recommends frequent and regular U-2 coverage of the island (of Cuba) to the extent that the primary objectives are covered once a month.
6 October	3099 flew, but aborted -- mechanical.
6 October	USIB D-41.5/26 (COMOR D-24/21) dated 6 October 1962 entitled "Intelligence Justification for Overflights of Cuba" presented for information and comments to the United States Intelligence Board meeting on 9 October prior to its presentation to the Special Group on 9 October. The paper in effect stresses the "pressing and continuing need for up-to-date intelligence on the progress of the Soviet arms build-up in Cuba."
7 October	3100 flew successful mission.
10 October	USIB D-41.5/28 (COMOR D-24/22) dated 10 October 1962. Subject: Intelligence Justification and Requirements for Overflight of Cuba -- a statement of USIB's action on the subject paper and recommends that "the Chairman (USIB) should express to the Special Group the Board's view that the targets . . . should be surveyed as promptly as possible, and that the results of such initial surveillance should determine the subsequent frequency of coverage to be recommended."
10-12 October	Looked at weather daily -- no alert. On 12th we were told operational control was going to SAC and forecasts were canceled.
13-14 October	SAC -- Mission 3101. - Not Major Anderson.

N2 shutdown

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Tab B

Summary of U-2 Missions Forecast for Cuba Extracted from Monthly Forecast for CIA Air Activities Submitted to the Special Group from June 1961 to October 1962

Date of Memo 1961	Month in which Missions are to take place 1961	No. of Missions Forecast	Date under column heading "Date approved by Special Group"
2 June	for June	4	11 May
3 July	July	4 cover note that while 4 planned only 2 required	11 May
2 August	August	2 Note says each mission will be reviewed prior to next one. Note on cover "although 4 Cuban missions were forecast review indicated only 1 required for July"	11 May
5 September	September	2 Note says each mission will be reviewed prior to next one.	11 May
3 October	October	1	11 May
1 November	November	1	11 May
30 November	December	1	11 May
29 December	January 1962	1	11 May

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Tab B

Date of Memo	Month in which Missions are to take place	No. of Missions Forecast	Date under column heading: "Date approved by Special Group"
1962	1962		1961
31 January	for February	2	11 May
27 February	March	2	11 May
28 March	April	2	11 May
25 April	May	2	1962 1 February
29 May	June	2	1 February
27 June	July	2	14 June
29 July	August	2	19 July
26 August	September	2	19 July
26 September	October	Notes 2 or more approved in Sept. for MRBMs will have to carry over to October.	19 July

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Tab C

SUMMARY OF U-2 MISSIONS OVER CUBA

MISSION NUMBER	DATE	RESULTS (S=Successful)
3001	26 Oct 1960	Abort, electrical
3002	27 Oct 1960	Much cloud cover
3003	27 Nov 1960	S
3010	4 Dec 1960	Abort-contrails
3011	5 Dec 1960	Abort-contrails
3016	11 Dec 1960	S
3028	19 Mar 1961	S
3029	21 Mar 1961	S
3030	6 Apr 1961	S
3033	11 Apr 1961	S
3034	13 Apr 1961	S
3035	15 Apr 1961	S
3036	15 Apr 1961	S
3037	16 Apr 1961	S
3038	17 Apr 1961	S
3039	17 Apr 1961	S
3040	18 Apr 1961	S
3041	18 Apr 1961	S
3042	19 Apr 1961	S
3043	20 Apr 1961	S
3045	23 Apr 1961	S
3047	29 Apr 1961	S
3048	23 May 1961	S
3049	15 Jun 1961	S
3051	28 Jun 1961	S
3052	27 Jul 1961	S
3053	28 Jul 1961	Abort-Camera malfunction
3054	29 Jul 1961	S
3058	3 Sep 1961	S
3060	26 Oct 1961	S
3061	6 Dec 1961	S
3062	19 Jan 1962	S-landed Key West
3064	31 Jan 1962	Air abort - mechanical
3065	2 Feb 1962	S
3067	21 Feb 1962	S
3071	15 Mar 1962	S
3074	1 Apr 1962	S
3078	2 May 1962	S
3079	22 May 1962	S
3080	6 Jun 1962	S
3081	15 Jun 1962	S
[redacted]	[redacted] Jun 1962	S

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3083	29 Jun 1962	S
3084	8 Jul 1962	Camera failure
3085	12 Jul 1962	S
3086	5 Aug 1962	S
3088	29 Aug 1962	S
3089	5 Sep 1962	S
3091	17 Sep 1962	Heavy cloud cover
3092	22 Sep 1962	Cancelled due to weather
3093	26 Sep 1962	S
3095	29 Sep 1962	S
3098	5 Oct 1962	S
3099	6 Oct 1962	Air abort-fuel problems
3100	7 Oct 1962	S

SAC MISSIONS

3101	14 Oct 1962	S
3102	15 Oct 1962	~~S~~ **Shutter malfunction**
3103	15 Oct 1962	~~S~~ **Camera jammed; partial malfunction**
3104	17 Oct 1962	S
3105	17 Oct 1962	S
3106	17 Oct 1962	S
3107	17 Oct 1962	S
3108	17 Oct 1962	S
3109	17 Oct 1962	~~S~~ **Camera malfunction**
3110	18 Oct 1962	S
3111	18 Oct 1962	S
3112	19 Oct 1962	S
3113	19 Oct 1962	S
3114	19 Oct 1962	S
3115	20 Oct 1962	~~S~~ **Film high contrast**
3116	20 Oct 1962	S
3117	20 Oct 1962	S

~~TOTAL 16 Missions planned.~~
~~16 Mission successful.~~

3118	22 Oct. 1962	S
3119	22 Oct. 1962	S
3120	22 Oct. 1962	**Camera malfunction**
3121	23 Oct. 1962	**Not evaluated yet**
3122	23 Oct. 1962	**Not evaluated yet**
3123	23 Oct. 1962	**Not evaluated yet**
3125	24 Oct. 1962	**Bad weather**

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Tab D

21 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Reconnaissance of Cuba

Following is a chronological resume of considerations by the Special Group (5412) and the Special Group (Augmented) of U-2 reconnaissance activities over Cuba. This summary begins as of 1 May 1961 (i.e., after the Bay of Pigs).

11 May 1961. It was agreed that policy approval for U-2 flights over Cuba is still in effect.

1 February 1962. The Cuba missions were stepped up from one per month to two.

14 June 1962. A COMOR recommendation that two additional flights be authorized for June was approved by the Group.

12 July 1962. (Augmented Group) Mr. McCone emphasized that reconnaissance of Cuba has developed complete information on deployment and facilities for the Army, Navy and Air Force, and that it has verified the fact that there is sufficient logistic support for a 75,000-man military force. No missile sites have been found.

12 July 1962. The Group agreed to continue with the presently-authorized schedule of two flights per month.

19 July 1962. Cuba was considered as part of a set of proposals covering reconnaissance world-wide. The two flights per month pattern was reiterated. (This was later approved by higher authority.)

9 August 1962. The Group agreed that the second mission authorized for August should be flown whenever the DCI decides that the immediate situation with respect to Soviet materiel justifies it. It was noted that this would use up existing authorizations for August and if a third mission should become necessary later in the month, it should be considered on its merits at that time.

30 August 1962. In connection with the Agency's monthly forecast, General Carter mentioned that there might be an additional requirement for flights over Cuba.

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Tab D

10 September 1962. At a special meeting attended by the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, the Acting DCI, and others, the Secretary expressed concern over the Agency's planned coverage of Cuba. He objected particularly to the proposal to combine extensive overflying of international waters with actual overflights. As a result of this discussion, it was agreed that the Agency's proposed coverage would have to be broken into four parts - one over the Isle of Pines, one over the eastern end of Cuba, and two legs along the coast - one north and one south. Within this framework, higher authority later gave approval for three flights in addition to those already authorized, with priority to the overflights. (Note: The Agency later secured agreement to continue the Isle of Pines leg over the Bay of Pigs area, after considerable negotiation with State.)

14 September 1962. A JCS representative outlined the capabilities for low-level coverage of certain targets in Cuba. It was noted that the Secretary of Defense did not wish this operation considered further until the results of Agency reconnaissance in the same area became available. General Carter said that special efforts will be required to identify certain installations, the nature of which is not clear at present.

27 September 1962. An additional mission for Cuba was approved.

4 October 1962 (Augmented Group). The DCI pointed out that the Agency is now restricted to using the U-2 in the southeastern quadrant of Cuba, because of the SAM sites. It was questioned whether this was a reasonable restriction at this time, particularly since the SAMs were almost certainly not operational.

9 October 1962 (Augmented Group). The Group discussed the spectrum of possible reconnaissance activities. It was agreed that first priority should be given to one U-2 in the western part of the island. Depending on the results of this, a number of similar sorties might be mounted. (Higher authority later approved the one mission, leaving the second proposition open.)

15 October 1962. At a special meeting two U-2 missions, designed to cover all of Cuba, were approved. These were concurred in by higher authority.

After the 15th of October, additional coverage was agreed on at other meetings. The Special Group was not convened for this purpose.

Thomas A. Parrott

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Tab E

10 September 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Tactical Reconnaissance of Cuba

1. At an executive session of the Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance (COMOR) held on 8 September 1962, and at the request of the Defense Intelligence Agency representative, the need for conducting tactical reconnaissance of Cuba was discussed and the following conclusions reached.

2. The facility near Banes, Cuba (205850N/753815W) initially described by the National Photographic Interpretation Center as a possible surface-to-air missile site needs additional coverage. It is considered by the COMOR that at this time this specific objective is by itself the highest priority for satisfaction by photo reconnaissance means.

3. In order to establish the exact function and the operational characteristics of this facility, it is the conclusion of COMOR that this target will almost certainly in the near future require photography of a larger scale than can be acquired by the U-2.

4. It is recommended that you initiate the necessary action (including Special Group approval) to provide for the employment, when directed by higher authority, of tactical-type reconnaissance against Banes or other targets as are identified in COMOR-D-24/15, which was made available to DIA on 1 September 1962.

Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA
Acting Director

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Tab F

CHRONOLOGY OF SOVIET ARMS AID TO CUBA

I. SAMs and Coastal Missiles

1. Central Intelligence Agency suspected that the Soviet arms shipments to Cuba included the supply of defensive missiles in early August when it was noted that Soviet shipping had greatly increased over previous levels. This was in the Daily Economic Highlights and in the Current Intelligence Weekly Review of 10 August. Our reported suspicion was based largely on the fact that the Soviet activity in Cuba was not following the overt patterns previously established in other non-bloc countries which received Soviet arms aid. By mid-August refugee reporting from Opalocka and clandestine reporting by JMWAVE was providing evidence that SAM sites were indeed being constructed in Cuba by the USSR. This was reported to the Watch Committee and published in the Current Intelligence Weekly Review of August 24.

2. On 31 August we received confirmation from the National Photographic Interpretation Center that at least eight SAM sites were being constructed in Cuba.

II. MRBMs and IRBMs

3. We had no real suspicions that offensive missile sites were being built in Cuba. Although for over a year CO and DDP sources reported many sightings of objects alleged to be long-range missiles supplied by the USSR, the vast majority of these reports had been proven false by checking them against photographic evidence. Those that could not be proven false could not be confirmed from any other source.

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4. MRBM and IRBM sites were confirmed by the National Photographic Interpretation Center on 16 October (14 October missions).

III. IL-28 Jet Light Bombers

5. We first suspected that the USSR might supply these bombers in September when the unique nature of the Soviet arms buildup in Cuba became clear. This was reflected in SNIE 85-3-62. The first evidence that the USSR was supplying IL-28 aircraft came in early October from a sighting report of very large crates on a Soviet merchant ship destined for Cuba.

6. The presence of these bombers was confirmed on 10 October when we received low altitude U.S. Navy photographs of the Soviet merchant ship Kasimov which were taken on 28 September. Further confirmation was received when the National Photographic Interpretation Center reported the presence of three aircraft at San Julian Airfield on 17 October.